Hal E. Hostin

Ingersoll Lectures on Immortality

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SPIRITUAL VALUES AND ETERNAL LIFE

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The Ingersoll Lecture, 1927

SPIRITUAL VALUES AND ETERNAL LIFE

BY

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

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THE INGERSOLL LECTURESHIP

Extract from the will of Miss Caroline Haskell Ingersoll, who died in Keene, County of Cheshire, New Hampshire, Jan. 26, 1893

First. In carrying out the wishes of my late beloved father, George Goldthwait Ingersoll, as declared by him in his last will and testament, I give and bequeath to Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., where my late father was graduated, and which he always held in love and honor, the sum of Five thousand dollars ($5,000) as a fund for the establishment of a Lectureship on a plan somewhat similar to that of the Dudleian lecture, that is — one lecture to be delivered each year, on any convenient day between the last day of May and the first day of December, on this subject, "the Immortality of Man," said lecture not to form a part of the usual college course, nor to be delivered by any Professor or Tutor as part of his usual routine of instruction, though any such Professor or Tutor may be appointed to such service. The choice of said lecturer is not to be limited to any one religious denomination, nor to any one profession, but may be that of either clergyman or layman, the appointment to take place at least six months before the delivery of said lecture. . . . The same lecture to be named and known as "the Ingersoll lecture on the Immortality of Man."

SPIRITUAL VALUES AND ETERNAL LIFE

I

THE difficulties involved in adding one more lecture to an endless chain of annual discourses on immortality are obvious. The fact, however, that on this Foundation so many lecturers have gone before, and will come after, brings one advantage: no incumbent need try to be comprehensive. Each lecturer may say that single thing about the mystery of death and its aftermath which seems most cogent to his mind and most appealing to his experience. To that use of the lectureship I address myself. There will be no endeavor to present a synoptic view of the problem of immortality. Rather, I shall lead you to

the one spot whither I find my mind invariably going when I think of life after death. So, in viewing some comprehensive landscape, we commonly seek a favorite outlook from which we think we can see best what, after all, is too vast to be seen thoroughly. Such an outlook upon immortality each of us tends to choose as he grows older. He knows that it is not the only one, but it is his.

Certainly, many significant matters involved in the problem of immortality diverge from one question: What is to be the destiny of the spiritual values which man experiences and creates? When one stands back from the spectacle which the universe presents, imaginatively gets himself outside of it, and objectively looks at it, the most incredible fact in the entire affair is not its size or its law-abiding order, but the spiritual values which have appeared in man. On *a priori* grounds they are an event unpre-

dictable from anything visible or to be conjectured before they actually arrived. The love of truth and the capacity to understand it, which create our science; the love of beauty and the power to produce it, which make our literature, painting, architecture, and music; the love of goodness, from which radiant characters and creators of social righteousness have come; the love of people, by which we are woven into a reticulated fabric of families, friendships, and societies — these spiritual values make life worthful. Truth, beauty, goodness, and love transform existing into living. A man uninterested in them is in so far not a man, and a man undevoted to them is a betrayer of his race.

The pertinence of this to the discussion of immortality is clear. Death looked at with the conservation of spiritual values in mind is no longer merely a mysterious ending of individual exist-

ence. It does not simply stop Pasteur's work when he would willingly go on, or choke Keats when he has barely started singing, or lay Lincoln in the grave when he most is needed, or take from us one by one our friends. This individual significance of death is so obvious and its attendant sense of loss is so poignant that it naturally absorbs attention. The real problem, however, lies deeper. Upon a planet that once was uninhabited and that some day will be uninhabitable, the dominance of death means not simply the final end of individuals, but the final end of those spiritual values which we have known here, which inhere in individuals and their relationships, and which have seemed to us the supremely precious fruits of the creative process.

As another has described the dénouement, if death is to have ultimate dominion over all:

"Man will go down into the pit, and all his thoughts will perish. The uneasy consciousness, which in this obscure corner has for a brief space broken the contented silence of the universe, will be at rest. Matter will know itself no longer. 'Imperishable monuments' and 'immortal deeds,' death itself, and love stronger than death, will be as though they had not been. Nor will anything that is be better or be worse for all that the labour, genius, devotion, and suffering of man have striven through countless generations to effect."

Obviously, the problem of death and what lies after, viewed from such an angle, is no left-over of old superstition, nor is it merely wishful thinking born out of personal grief. Its consideration is an essential of any serious philosophy of reality, a necessary and integral element in any comprehensive world-view.

II

To be sure, men have believed in immortality for many reasons unrelated to the conservation of spiritual values. Immortality is a faith held in some form by most of the human race, but argued for by very diverse processes of thought. Men probably began believing in immortality because of dreams. Long after the decease and burial of the tribe's chief or the family's father, did he not return in visions of the night, still walking abroad, looking as once he looked and speaking as once he spoke? Discrimination between phantasy and fact is a late, sophisticated achievement, so that it well may be that the first argument ever urged for life after death sprang from the appearance of the dead in dreams.

Long afterwards, the argument for post-mortem existence was lifted from this primitive stage to the moral level. Men became interested in justice. They

reached out toward their first crude theodicies, their earliest attempts to construe the world as governed by a righteous God. No longer were they satisfied with vague ideas of an after-world peopled by ghosts and lacking moral distinctions. Good and evil men could not so fare alike. The after-world became valuable for the very reason that there the inequities of this present existence could be balanced up and justice done at last. The good, unrewarded here, might there be crowned; the evil, unpunished here, might there receive their retribution. So, at the close of the Old Testament, the Book of Daniel, while presenting no general doctrine of immortality, draws a dramatic picture of the resurrection of at least a few — the specially good and the specially wicked — from the indiscriminate chaos of Sheol: "some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

In India this moral argument issued in the doctrine of Karma: each man's present estate was attributed to his sin or goodness in previous incarnations. By all means the most popularly held idea of immortality in mankind's history is reincarnation. From ancient Greek and Indian believers to modern American Theosophists, the doctrine has had an innumerable following. So Xenophanes satirized Pythagoras:

> Once he was moved to pity — so men say —
> Seeing a dog rough-handled by the way.
> "Forbear thy hand; housed in yon cur doth lie
> A friend of mine; I knew him by his cry."

Orthodox Protestantism, with its traditional heaven and hell, regards such doctrine as incredible. Diverse though the forms of its expression are, however, the basic argument for immortality in ancient Indian philosophy and in orthodox Protestantism is much the same. Justice must be achieved, and it is not

achieved within the span of a single lifetime. "A deed once done," says the Indian philosophy, "follows after its doer as among a thousand cows a calf finds its mother." Because, so runs the argument, the deed, thus remorselessly stalking its doer, cannot always catch him within the limits of a lifetime, there must be another life to make the final capture possible.

Long after this moral argument for immortality in its simpler forms arose, metaphysical apologetics began. Plato argued for the essential immateriality of the soul and therefore for its indestructibility, and from then till now each new philosophy has taken up the argument afresh and, if it has permitted credence in life after death at all, has constructed its own appropriate reasons for belief.

Many modern minds, reviewing this infinite variety of argument for life after death, from the dreams of our primitive

ancestors to Bergson, feel in the constantly shifting apologetic an occasion for doubt. Is not all this sheer rationalization? Does not this obviously reveal man's propensity to believe what he will and then make up as many arguments for it as he can construct? Is not belief in immortality primarily a defence-mechanism, compensating for present frustrations by future hopes?

This impression is so prevalent that it is important to note the fact, commonly forgotten, that the majority of humankind have not at all believed in life after death because they wished to. Of all folk who believe in immortality to-day, the larger number, notably in India, are filled with fear and misery at the thought of it. The dread of rebirth haunts them. To escape from the endless tragedy of successive lives is their dearest dream. The wheel of existence which, unless some salvation from it can be found,

rolls on forever is their picture of utter horror. They believe in life after death, not because of their wishes, but in spite of them. "The evidence of those who dread the continuance of consciousness, yet still believe it to be true," says one writer, "is almost more telling than the evidence of those who crave it as a boon." What we commonly forget is that, were a poll taken of all human beings on earth to-day as to whether continuance of individual consciousness after death is desirable, the possibility is that a majority would vote No.

Continuity of belief, therefore, associated with endless variety of reasons and arguments, is not in itself an occasion for doubt. To see humanity across the ages worrying over a Protean problem which keeps appearing in new shapes, trying to give it up but unable to let it drop, throwing it out of the door only to see it return through the window,

believing it but habitually forced to seek new reasons for belief, does not primarily suggest doubt. It suggests the presence of an unescapable problem. It indicates that, no matter what road of thought men travel, they run inevitably into a towering interrogation which they cannot avoid.

This impression is deepened by the present situation in modern thought. We no longer believe in life after death because of dreams, nor are we persuaded by old forms of argument concerning the demands for justice. We are not convinced by Platonic ideas of the soul's immateriality, and both reasons for and conceptions of the future life that kindled our fathers' ardor leave us cold. But, for all that, we are full of questions about death and its aftermath. Our modern development of knowledge has led us into that question as inevitably as any road of thought which our ancestors

travelled. With us the question characteristically rises out of our concern for the destiny of man's spiritual values. What is to happen to them? Are they to perish in the fatal refrigeration of a congealed planet? Will some cosmic cataclysm, ending in a wrecked or burned-out solar system, be the finale of mankind's endeavor? Or do our spiritual values spring out of creative reality, represent and reveal creative reality, find on earth a transient theatre of development and operation, and possess a hope of continuance that not even the death of the planet can stop?

For myself, I always come at the problem of immortality from that angle. My belief in life eternal springs out of the haunting faith which Ralph Waldo Emerson put into words characteristically compressed:

> What is excellent,
> As God lives, is permanent.

III

This approach to the problem can best be understood by tracing the history of thought which lies immediately behind us. A few generations back one finds a consuming interest in future rewards and punishments. Not only in religious circles, but out of them, heaven and hell were considered both true as facts and necessary as motives for right living. To picture a glorious future paradise as the consummation of man's endeavor and then to argue from post-mortem ambition so aroused that men should live the kind of moral lives and perform the sort of religious duties which would assure such heavenly consequence, was recognized as cogent and rational appeal. Popular preachers by this method could sway multitudes. Much as an eloquent writer of railroad advertisements now argues for the use of his road because

Florida, resplendently described, lies at the other end of it, the various religious routes were played up and estimated in terms of their comfort and convenience in reaching heaven.

With the advent of the modern age, however, this concentration of ambition and desire upon heaven faced a powerful rival. Human hope, which long had turned to a future paradise as its one true goal, began to find satisfaction in contemplating instead a future earth. The many forces whose combined pressure was pushing mankind out of its old thought and life into new adventures conspired to alter the complexion of man's anticipation. With new continents opened up for exploration and experiment, with new powers put into man's hands through control of nature's law-abiding forces, with new social relationships prophesied by the incoming of democracy, and with the whole chang-

ing order of man's life undergirded and rationalized by the theory of evolution, human hope inevitably tended to shift from heaven to earth. The voices which spoke most typically for the generation just behind us were hopeful, but not about a post-mortem heaven. They had brought to earth the paradise of their desires. The isles of the blessed were no longer in the west; they were only a few years ahead. "Progress," cried Herbert Spencer, "is not an accident, but a necessity . . . so surely must the things we call evil and immorality disappear; so surely must man become perfect." In that dithyrambic chorus of mid-Victorian optimists, both poets and scientists, hymnologists and sociologists joined. What Spencer put into prose — "The ultimate development of the ideal man is logically certain — as certain as any conclusion in which we place the most implicit faith" — Tennyson put into poetry,

and even the churches' hymnals began to include more songs about the kingdom of heaven on earth than about the kingdom of heaven in a future paradise. Man's spiritual values were to be fulfilled on this planet. Goodness, truth, beauty, love had here their expectations, and in achieving and experiencing these man's highest hopes were to be consummated.

That this mood and attitude are now largely obsolete among those who typically represent our modern thought seems obvious. Says Mr. Bertrand Russell: "Men sometimes speak as though the progress of science must necessarily be a boon to mankind, but that, I fear, is one of the comfortable nineteenth-century delusions which our more disillusioned age must discard." Out of confident faiths in mankind's perfectibility and ringing prophecies of uninterrupted progress which characterized the latter

days of the nineteenth century, we have fallen upon a pessimistic mood which curiously examines the conceivable ways in which the earth once more will become uninhabitable. Some suspect that mankind will destroy itself even before the earth is worn out. Some foresee the end of the race in "an overwhelming flood of feeble-mindedness." Some see the earth congealing until it is as dead as the moon; some prophesy the decreasing distance of earth and sun until the planet is burned to a cinder; some guess that a stellar collision will end the earth's life. Some see mankind escaping underground to live out its last, feeble, hopeless centuries, and some desperately take refuge in the thought of pioneering expeditions by rockets — strange new Mayflowers — to escape a dying earth and settle distant planets for a new try at life. Many are the diversities in detail, but one note is common: man's future on this planet

is a precarious struggle against the tremendous forces of the cosmos, and at last the struggle will end in a dead and uninhabitable world. Says one writer:

"We sound the future, and learn that after a period, long compared with the individual life, but short indeed compared with the divisions of time open to our investigation, the energies of our system will decay, the glory of the sun will be dimmed, and the earth, tideless and inert, will no longer tolerate the race which has for a moment disturbed its solitude."

It is this outlook on the future which challenges the thought and faith of our generation. Here is the matrix in which contemporary arguments for God and immortality must be set. Religious faith has hitherto contributed to man's life the stabilizing assurance, as another phrased it, that "affairs are, cosmically speaking, in a sound state." But if the

contemporary mood and attitude represent the truth, then that central confidence of religion is flatly and finally denied: affairs are not, cosmically speaking, in a sound state; the universal bank is shaky and cannot be counted on; it is, as a matter of fact, foredoomed to failure; it cannot keep what we have committed unto it against that day. There is no God, then, except man's own subjective spiritual values and, as for them, the days of their years are threescore and ten million, or even by reason of strength fourscore million, yet is their pride but labor and sorrow; for it is soon gone, and they fly away.

Such is the attitude of many modern minds, from Thomas Hardy to Anatole France, from Bertrand Russell to George Santayana. They love the valuable experiences which are here to be enjoyed, but they see them set in a matrix of cosmic apathy and ultimate destructive-

ness. So I have seen the smoke cloud from Vesuvius, gloriously lighted by the rising sun, trail its resplendent length along the Bay of Naples. It was very beautiful, but it came from a volcano which cared nothing for its beauty and might at any moment belch ruinous fury against all loveliness within its reach. So, many conceive the relationship between our spiritual values and the cosmos. They see in the universe only what one writer has described as "unimaginable tracts of space and time, in which move bodies by fixed laws towards ends which are wholly fortuitous, and have not the smallest relation to the advantage or requirements of Man." Undismayed by this outlook, these persistent spirits delimit their vision to this earth and make up their minds to value and enjoy it while it lasts. Thinking man's spiritual values of no more interest to the universe than flowers are to the weather,

they still keep their courage up. They translate God into subjective meanings such as "social goodwill" and, making the best of a bad mess, as a friend of mine described this process, proceed to live as well and serve their fellows as nobly as they can. All honor to them! International coöperation and goodwill are well worth toiling for, even if the planet has no permanent tenure as man's residence, and to have found the cause and cure of yellow fever or to have written Bach's Passion Music was a splendid expenditure of energy, even if the last human being some day will perish. Nevertheless, this lapse of man's spiritual values, from being valid interpreters of creative reality and triumphant conquerors of death to being fortuitous by-products of a mechanistic process ignorant of what it does, is not so small a matter as some men try to make out. If their defeatism is unavoid-

able, we shall have to make the best of it. But is it unavoidable?

Not for the first time in the long story of man's thinking does materialism today claim the philosophic field. Long ago Democritus worked out an atomistic philosophy in which the chance concourse of physical particles was the sufficient explanation of everything. After Democritus, however, came Plato with his spiritual interpretation of reality. Then Lucretius, with flaming enthusiasm, tried once more the explanation of all existence in terms of matter's combinations. After Lucretius, Christianity swept in with its spiritual interpretation of life. Then modern skepticism began, and from Descartes worked its way out to Hume. But after Hume came Kant, with his reëstablishment of the moral values as decisive elements in the world's interpretation. Always after Democritus, Plato; after Lucretius,

Christianity; after Hume, Kant. So today, mechanistic naturalism, momentarily triumphant, is met by resurgent suspicions of its adequacy. Once more the voices rise protesting that, whether you call it the "*élan vital*," or the "principle of concretion in the universe," or "God," there is something here of which the mere combination of atoms takes no just account. Once more returns the assurance that man's spiritual values are so profoundly consubstantial with this universe that this universe, interpreted without consideration of their meaning and their destiny, is not really interpreted at all.

IV

To endeavor in a single lecture even a thin sketch of the arguments on which the new criticism of materialistic naturalism is founded would be absurd, even if the lecturer were specially qualified for

the task. We may well pause long enough, however, to note certain basic reasons for dissatisfaction with all philosophies of life that allow no room for the conservation and increase of man's spiritual values.

In the first place, man's spiritual values are a matter of fact. They do exist. To say that they exist within our experience is not to diminish the force of that statement. Our experience is a fact; that also evolved in and out of this universe, is part and parcel of it, and is as truly factual as rocks or stars. Alpha Centauri is no more a fact than is Wordsworth writing the *Ode on Immortality*. The universe produced both of them. The universe cannot be understood without treating both of them as bases for induction. The cosmos did not stop with newts, but went on to Newton; it did not exhaust itself in crystals, but produced Christ. Goodness, truth, beauty,

love — these are existent facts forcibly effectual in our world, and no explanation of existence that treats them and their personal embodiments as accidental aliens does justice to their factual aspect.

This consideration is the more emphasized the more one ponders this world and is impressed, not simply by its size, but by its unity. No fact is the whole of itself. No fact stands like a bottle in the rain, an isolated, nonparticipating unit. All facts are interwoven and reticulated; they spring from the same source and are governed by the same laws. The essential nature of any item in this vast whole is not in the item alone but in its relationships with all the rest, so that no one can thoroughly understand the flower in the crannied wall without understanding the universe, or understand the universe without understanding the flower in the crannied wall.

All creation is a seamless garment; we cannot rip it up according to our caprice and understand it piecemeal. The habit of mind, therefore, which bifurcates the universe, putting physical facts on one side and on the other such personal facts as the experience of spiritual values, and then proceeds to interpret the essential nature of the universe in terms of the former, regarding the latter as inconsequential and impermanent by-products, has something deeply the matter with it.

To be sure, a problem of colossal difficulty is presented by the contrast between the physical universe — huge, impersonal, mechanical — and our spiritual values. If a man approaches that problem from the standpoint of the material universe, he must wonder how any concourse of atoms ever could produce goodness, truth, beauty, and love. And if a man approaches the problem from the standpoint of the spiritual values, he

must wonder at this strange matrix of whirling stars and immeasurable distances in which they are set. But difficult as the problem is, to deny either side of the dilemma an essential part in the solution is too cheap and easy an evasion. Any philosophy which tries that superficial short cut is doomed to insecure tenure. Quantity and quality, physical fact and spiritual fact are both here, organically part of one unified system, and the human mind returns discontented from all endeavors to treat physical facts as regulative, and spiritual facts as negligible, in the understanding of the system.

In the second place, mechanistic materialism, the more logical and thoroughgoing it is, leads the mind only the more surely into a *cul-de-sac*, where one is convinced that the right road has been missed. If spiritual values are not determinative in this universe, if they are

not a purposeful flowering out of a creative process which cares for them and will preserve them, then only physical causation is left as the ultimate explanation of existence. Now, physical causation, as Professor Hobhouse says, is "a continuous process in which each phase is determined wholly by that out of which it issues and in nowise by that into which it will pass." That is to say, according to this philosophy, there is a materialistic push in this universe which causes everything, but there is no purposeful pull.

All causation, then, would lie in the anterior matter with which this universe started. In that postulated primal stardust would be potential Plato's brain and Christ's character. All spiritual results would be but the predetermined ticking off of that mysteriously wound-up clock of fortuitously organized atoms, and all great science, music, art, and character

would be as automatic as the sounds which a cuckoo clock makes at midnight. There is something so unreal about such an interpretation of man's intellectual, moral, and aesthetic life, that the mind no sooner faces it than the revolt against it inevitably begins.

From such an interpretation of life mentally intolerable consequences continually flow. All man's thoughts, then, as well as his ideals, must be, as expounders of this theory have said, utterly inoperative in this world, wholly consequence and never cause. They are the shadow cast by the moving train of matter; they are the sound of the bell after the clapper has landed on the bronze. They are produced by sublimated matter but they themselves can produce nothing. But by the very hypothesis of evolution mind developed because it was operative, because it did powerfully aid the survival of those who

possessed it, because it was not inconsequential but tremendously effectual in controlling environment. These materialistic evolutionists cannot both eat their cake and have it. They cannot say that man's mental and spiritual life developed because it mightily aided survival, and still say that it is only the helpless shadow cast by the moving train of matter.

This is only a sample of the many blind alleys into which mechanistic materialism lands the mind. And nowhere are the consequences more intellectually difficult to accept than when this anterior matter of the universe has so far sublimated itself as to produce the human brain, and man's mental and spiritual life is conceived as the steam from that boiling pot, the mist from that evaporating pool. Do not all physical atoms move in paths of least resistance? Do not the particles of the brain follow

that law, too? One is compelled, therefore, to imagine Beethoven's brain-molecules fortuitously concatenated to such good effect that the Fifth Symphony resulted, and the Sermon on the Mount as produced by nothing but physical molecules going through an unusually effective manœuvre along paths of least resistance in Christ's Broca convolution.

There is something so profoundly inadequate about this mechanistic philosophy that the mind refuses permanently to stomach it. For personality, as we experimentally know it, is not a powerless, inoperative consequence of manœuvring atoms. Personality is effectively causative. Without doubt it has been built up within the scaffolding of the brain and, at least temporarily, depends upon the brain. But it transcends its original condition, it rises above the material forces of the world, it shapes them, controls them, commands even its own

psychological processes to such good purpose that from new systems of education to new means of locomotion mind increasingly masters the world, and the boundaries of its mastery are as yet invisible. This fact of personality's emergence and controlling power, its subjection of physical processes to spiritual ideals, its transcendence above the world and lordship over it, is the most amazing and revealing fact in the universe, and any interpretation of the universe which denies to it regulative influence is like an endeavor to interpret the solar system without noticing the sun.

Most of all, however, man's impatience with materialistic philosophies is caused by his inward sense of values, his imperious conviction that in goodness, truth, beauty, and love he has priceless treasures which give to existence all its meaning. He seems to himself to live in two worlds. One essentially is temporal:

death obviously has dominion over it. But another realm of experience is his, where death is an intruder and an alien.

There are, for example, no natural horizons to knowledge. By its essential nature the love of truth invites one to an endless quest. Let the truth-seeker live unimaginable millions of years, and yet he would die at last with Goethe's final words upon his lips: "More light!" There is no credible end to the appreciation and creation of beauty. Essentially this experience is timeless. Beethoven was representing all his spiritual kindred when he spoke of music as entrance into a realm "which comprehends mankind but which mankind cannot comprehend." There are no boundaries around developing character and love, and to him whose feet are upon that highroad it feels like an ascent with new horizons awaiting it from every height. The repeated renaissance of interest in im-

mortality, even when simpler motives for desiring it are overpassed, springs from this deepest, richest, most imperious experience of man — spiritual values whose inalienable property is that even now they are in quality eternal. From all endeavors to explain away this experience, reduce it to illusion, call it the by-product of a purposeless machine, man's mind inevitably recoils. Still we return to those inward spiritual treasuries where moth and rust cannot corrupt nor thieves break through and steal, feeling of them what Shakspere felt about his love:

> Thou art much too fair
> To be death's conquest and make worms thine heir.

V

When we come at immortality by this route, we obviously leave behind us many arguments which have lost their cogency for modern minds, and all or-

thodoxy's theatrical settings of heaven and hell. The future life as a bottomless pit or as a perpetual religious serenade is no longer even interesting, and a wise agnosticism chastens our speech about the detailed meanings of life eternal. While, however, old dramatic settings of man's hopes and fears are obsolete, and old dogmatisms become intolerable, one central matter is conserved by our approach: the persistence of personality beyond death. To be sure, that phrase must signify more than man's imagination can conceive. If immortality should prove to mean merely the endless continuance of individual consciousness, as now we know it, that would be, as Eastern philosophies long have recognized, not a boon but a curse. To be compelled to live with one's self forever, within the boundaries of our limited consciousness as it now exists, would be as dreadful a fate as man's

imagination could contemplate. Persistence of personality must involve an expanding experience, as far beyond the small globule of our present individuality as the universe itself is greater than a raindrop. But confidence that in personality we have lighted on an endless development is involved in any faith that man's spiritual values will be conserved.

Now, the continuance of spiritual values postulates the existence of personalities to express them. Spiritual values are not abstractions; they inhere inextricably in personalities and their relationships. One might as well talk about the continuance of gravitation if there were no physical relationships in which it could operate, as to speak of abiding love for truth, beauty, and goodness without personalities in whose fellowships such values have their only meaning. Only persons love; only persons see beauty,

seek truth, achieve goodness. If personalities perish finally at death, then in the end, upon a dead earth, all spiritual values which here we have experienced and created will vanish utterly.

Pierre Loti in one of his stories describes the death of his hero, a French soldier in Africa. The man is mortally wounded with an Arab knife and is left to die alone. Loti describes with pitiless detail the sensations of his dying: burning thirst, memories of home, thoughts of old friends, recollections of familiar prayers, convulsions of the throat, whirling lights and colors like flying dancers before his eyes, crowding spectres swirling like a whirlwind, until at last comes the end — a body left to be devoured by hyenas, jackals, and vultures, and a naked skull turned over and over by the desert winds. And that is all! Is it all? If it is, then some day upon a played-out planet all humanity will be dead, and of

a race that once loved timeless values nothing will be left but naked skulls rolled by cosmic winds across a desert. It is that dénouement which I do not believe.

Obviously, in this realm no compelling demonstration that will force assent is possible and no dogmatism is intellectually credible. There is adventurous risk in man's living and dying.

> It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
> It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles.

For myself, however, confidence in personality's victory over the grave is deep, and, as the years pass, it grows more assured. Charles Kingsley's attitude toward death seems wise and true: "God forgive me if I am wrong, but I look forward to it with an intense and reverent curiosity." To enter here and now into the world of spiritual values so that truth, goodness, beauty, and love are

one's very being, its substance and its glory — that is the present possession of eternal life. And to have faith that these spiritual values are no casual by-product of a negligent universe, but, rather, the very essence of the real world, and that death has no dominion over them or their possessors — that is faith in immortality.

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